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March 19, 1959



MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
March 19, 1959 - 9:00 AM

Others present: Secretary Harter
Deputy Under Secretary Murphy
Assistant Secretary Merchant
Mr. Reinhardt
Ambassador Whitney
General Goodpaster
Mr. Hagerty
Major Eisenhower

This was the second meeting involving informal briefings for the Macmillan talks. Secretary Harter mentioned that his primary objective in requesting this meeting was to discuss procedural matters. In answer to the President's question, he said there has been no change in the position paper. He visualizes that the two main areas of disagreement between the U.S. and the U.K. will be:

- (1) The broadness of our position with regard to the agenda for a foreign ministers conference, and
- (2) Whether or not a date should be specified for a summit meeting.

On the summit issue, the U.S., Germany and France are pretty much together. The U.K. position, differing from the others, is that the date for a summit meeting should be set forth in our reply.

The President then repeated the view which he had expressed previously with regard to Macmillan's loss of political position.

[REDACTED] Gramyko will offer nothing constructive at a foreign ministers meeting. The President wonders how long the British public will stand for continued insults at the hands of the Soviets. Mr. Murphy and Ambassador Whitney doubted that the British feel that their faces have been slapped, that on the contrary they tell themselves Macmillan's attitude has mollified

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Some discussion relative to schedules and administrative matters followed. The President approved the list of the permanent U.S. group for the meetings with Macmillan. They are Secretary Herter, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Merchant and General Goodpaster. (The President's secretary, Mrs. Whitman, will accompany General Goodpaster.) On the British side, the permanent group will consist of five people, Mr. Macmillan, Mr. Lloyd, Ambassador Caccia, Mr. Brock and Mr. Milton.

Turning to another item, the President questioned the meaning which we currently attach to the term "European security." On learning from Mr. Murphy that it pertained to proposals for a neutral zone, the President expressed astonishment at the favor which that proposal seems to be gaining in this country.

The President then turned to the subject of nuclear inspection. Here he repeated the thoughts which he had expressed in the meeting of March 17th on the subject of development of a practical inspection system. The President is of the opinion that we should desert the scientists, and to some extent the Department of Defense in their insistence on obtaining a perfect system. What the President desires is a workable system which will give a true picture to the extent desired. He holds no brief for the number of inspection stations which must be set up in the USSR, be it 2, 15 or 40; he holds no brief for any one particular degree of tolerance so long as the system is adequate to ensure the criterion agreed upon. Here Secretary Herter pointed out the difficulties which might be anticipated from the Senate in securing ratification of any agreement which allows for a threshold. He expressed the view that an agreement which could be restricted to

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atmospheric tests might be satisfactory. The President agreed emphatically with respect to atmospheric tests. He expressed the opinion that this would, in large measure, reduce the total number of tests, conducted by virtue of the costly nature of conducting underground tests.

Secretary Herter briefly mentioned the fact that the high altitude tests of 1958 had been made public yesterday without approval of the government. This brought a strong reaction from the President, who is of the opinion that some scientist had released the information. General Goodpaster explained the efforts to keep the release in perspective which had been made the day before. Mr. Sullivan, of the New York Times, apparently had notified Karl Harr that they were about to release the information which they had been holding back for some time at the remonstrance of Defense. In General Goodpaster's view, the Times felt it was about to lose a scoop, since the discussion of this test series was becoming prevalent. The President referred to the publication of this matter in strong terms, and deplored any plans for releasing more information on the basis that some had already leaked. General Goodpaster assured him that we have never authorized further disclosure of information. To set the record straight, General Goodpaster advised the President that part of the information which had been released was already available to the scientists through the IGY, due to the radiation readings which had been transmitted from the satellites. The scientists who had made these readings were not under governmental control.

The President then turned away from this subject to continue with his thoughts on a nuclear test ban. For our first step, we should restrict our agreements to refraining from conducting tests in the atmosphere. We should not initially strive for perfection of detection of all shots, including those detonated underground. He recognized that there may be difficulty in securing agreement from the Soviets for any sort of test ban short of complete abolition. He recognized the Soviet position on the veto and their fear of espionage. He stated that he wanted Dr. Killian, Mr. McCone and somebody from Defense available to come to Camp David for these discussions. In view of the fact that

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only the West will adhere to the agreements, and in view also of the fact that very high altitude shots (he mentioned 300-mile altitude) will send almost negligible radiation to the earth, he desired to follow this approach and discuss the matter with the British.

Turning to the economic questions set forth in the briefing book, the President expressed the opinion that the British desire primarily only to complain in this area. He inquired if there had been any movement since the wool import law of 1954. Secretary Herter and Mr. Hagerty informed the President that there is an opinion pending. Secretary Herter recommended a "sympathetic listening" approach. The President expressed the understanding that our code visualizes an import tax on the 36 million pounds of wool which come in. The revenues thus obtained are used to compensate the sheep growers. He directed that Dr. Paarlberg be alerted to brief him on the details and status of this 1954 wool act. (See memo of Dr. Paarlberg's conference with the President, this date.) Ambassador Whitney offered the recommendation that these economic matters be discussed to some extent, since Macmillan is more sympathetic to our viewpoint than is Lloyd, who normally deals with our economic relationships with Britain.

With regard to recognition of the GDR, the President expressed the view that Adenauer will never come near it. He mentioned the conflicting reports which had come from Paris and Bonn on the subject of the high level talks in those places. Secretary Herter and Ambassador Whitney agreed that we have not as yet found out what really did happen in those conferences.

The President then requested the State Department to begin work on writing up a draft communique. He approved Mr. Merchant's recommendation, which would:

(1) indicate in the communique that the U.S. and Britain had agreed on their position with respect to the Soviet note of March 2nd, and

(2) ensure that the results of the conference would be positions sent to the NATO working group.

The President then made an estimate as to the decision facing the British. The question is whether they are willing to break with Adenauer. This

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is an extremely difficult question. Six months after the war, when the Western allies were in the position of victors over Germany, we could dictate our position. Now it is essential that our position vs. the Soviets be satisfactory to the West Germans. He feels that the British should face up to the issue of what they are willing to do in the face of German objections. He feels that we have been wasting much effort on such vague procedures as "informing each other of our thinking."

The President then mentioned once more the nuclear testing item, in an attempt to place it in the perspective of our overall position in the world. Anything we and the Soviets can do to build confidence in each other's word is a step forward. We of the West are at present in the position of refusing everything brought up. This presents a poor image to the world, regardless of how spurious the Soviet proposals may be.

In passing, the President mentioned Khrushchev's statement to Macmillan, to the effect that the Soviets have no interest in testing small weapons, and that their thinking is based on weapons of large megaton yield. Secretary Herter said this statement is being evaluated at the State Department.

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The President then addressed the problem of how to handle the visit to Secretary Dulles in the hospital before leaving for Camp David. After a phone call to the Secretary, the President asked Secretary Herter to inform Macmillan of the President's desire to take him (Macmillan) on a friendly visit to see Secretary Dulles. If Macmillan himself desires also to take Selwyn Lloyd, this would be satisfactory.

After discussion of administrative matters, such as press photography and the schedule at Camp David, the meeting came to an end.

John S. D. Eisenhower

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